

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 3 line 8 with the following amended paragraph:

During play, each player gets a turn to handle the "shoe", which contains typically six to eight decks of cards and is specifically structured to facilitate the dealing of individual cards in a face down orientation. When a player has the shoe he is designated as the banker, but any player may decline the shoe and allow it to be passed, typically to a player's right, along the line of players. There is no advantage or disadvantage in dealing the cards and it is generally considered a formality which contributes to the game's ambiance, in that most sophisticated players enjoy being active in the dealing. A dealer, who is a representative of the casino, normally does not remove the cards from the shoe, but receives the cards from the banker/player. The dealer places the cards in an appropriate box or section on the playing surface, which is designated for a "player's hand" and a "banker's hand". Each of the plurality of players bet by placing their chips in a designated location on the playing surface, which is accessible to the plurality of players. Each player, except the player designated the banker, may place bets either on the player's hand, the banker's hand or both. The banker must bet on the banker's hand and all bets are paid off at even money. In most

casino controlled games betting parameters range from a minimum wager of twenty dollars to a maximum wager of two thousand dollars. After the winner is announced by the dealer, additional dealers, when more than one dealer is present at the table, pay off the winning bets and collect the losing bets. If the banker's hand was a winner, all the players wagering on the winning banker hand must pay a commission, typically in the amount of approximately five percent (5%) of their respective winning wagers. Accordingly, if a player had a hundred dollar bet on the banker's hand and won, five dollars would be owed to the house. Rather than collecting the "vigorous" after each game, a record of what is owed by each player is kept in a designated location on the playing surface by one or more dealers. Players then pay the accumulated amount owed to the house or casino after the completion of a shoe. Each time the shoe is depleted of cards, the total amount of cards are thoroughly shuffled and replaced in the shoe. Furthermore, in some variations, restrictions are placed on the banker's ability to immediately add to, remove and/or withdraw their wager after a winning hand. Specifically, once the initial wager is made, the house rule may require that if the first hand is won, a second hand must be played essentially letting the winning wager "ride". After that point the banker can then withdraw all or part of the winning bet amount. Additions to the winning bet can generally be made at

any time.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 9, line 25 with the following amended paragraph:

The method of play of the present invention comprises, in many aspects and embodiments, the play of a conventional game of baccarat, wherein each game of baccarat, as described hereinafter is meant to comprise the dealing of a player's hand and a banker's hand. More specifically, at the start of play the casino announces or designates a bonus payout. The bonus payout either can be in the form of a dollar amount and/or an odds payout, such as two to one, three to one, four to one, etc. Among the plurality of participants in the card game, a "banker" may typically be chosen. The "banker/player", hereinafter termed banker, is determined in accordance with conventional method of play in that the banker is defined by the player offered and accepting the shoe and attending to the physical dispensing of the cards from the shoe. Naturally, any participant may pass his turn at the shoe wherein the shoe is passed to the right successively to each player until a participant is found which will accept the shoe and become the banker. Prior to dealing the cards, the banker and/or any of the participants may be given the opportunity of making a bonus wager in addition to or as part of a normal primary wager. The primary wager, in typical

fashion, is made so as to participate in the next game of baccarat and the bonus wager allows the participant the possibility of collecting the bonus payout, which, as determined by the casino or house may be either a dollar amount or an odds amount. In either event the participant may or may not be required to make a bonus wager, and play continues in the manner of a conventional baccarat game.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 12, line 13 with the following amended paragraph:

As set forth above, the best hand possible to obtain in the conventional game of baccarat is the occurrence of a total number count of either a player's hand or a banker's hand, equaling nine, and as such does not occur during a majority of hands. In addition, while the occurrence of the total number of count of nine in consecutive hands is not a normal happening, it does occur and is the basis of one embodiment of "baccarat plus" or a variation of the conventional game of baccarat of the present invention, which greatly rewards at least the banker, in terms of being able to collect the bonus payout set by the casino. More specifically, a participant who has previously made a bonus wager, or is otherwise ~~[[eligible]]~~ eligible for the bonus payout, of a preset or agreed upon amount, will collect the bonus payout, also established by the

casino, if the total number count of each of at least two consecutive hands, played in consecutive baccarat games, are equal to a predetermined number count set by the casino. As emphasized above the best possible hand is a total number count of nine. Accordingly in one embodiment of the present invention the predetermined number count would be equal to nine. When nine is established as being the predetermined number count, the occurrence of a natural nine (ten or face card plus a nine card) or a broken nine (seven and two, six and three, four and five) may meet the requirement for consecutive hands of equal number count. Naturally the casino, for whatever reason, could establish a different predetermined number count for awarding consecutively occurring banker's hands. Also, in certain additional embodiments of the present invention, more than one number could be established by the casino, wherein consecutive hands could have a number count equal to either of the previously established predetermined numbers. Furthermore in a further embodiment of the present invention a bonus payout, such as in the form of an added payout or an increased winner payout may be made merely if either one of the hands totals nine, or if the participant's hand totals nine, or if a hand wagered upon totals nine, or another designated number count. As a result, the benefit of a win may be increased if the win comes with a number count of nine. Furthermore, although it is

preferred that all of the consecutive hands having a total of nine be the participant's hands, it may be desirable to provide for any combination of hands totaling nine or a natural nine. In the case of the consecutive hands totaling nine the bonus payout is preferably increased.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 20, line 14 with the following amended paragraph:

Looking to the computer processor assembly, it is structured to generate a player's hand and a banker's hand in accordance with rules of baccarat. Moreover, the computer processor assembly is also preferably structured to permit the user either before or after dealing the hands, to elect whether their user hand is the player's hand or the banker's hand. As a result, the user may play hunches and the like to decide which hand to play. Once the hands have been designated accordingly, the computer processor assembly is further structured to add cards to the player hand and the banker hand in accordance with the conventional rules of the ~~ear-d~~ card game baccarat, ultimately identifying one of the hands as a winning hand. Naturally, if the wining hand is the user hand, the user is designated a winner and a corresponding payout is made. So as to further enhance the playing experience, however, the computer processor assembly is further preferably structured to keep track

of consecutive ones of the user's hands, and to indicate a bonus payout to be paid to the user if a predetermined number count of nine occurs in at least two consecutive ones of the user's hands. Alternately or additionally, the bonus payout may be provided merely if one, or preferably the user's hand merely totals nine. In such an embodiment the increased bonus payout may also be provided for consecutive hands totaling nine.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 23, line 4 with the following amended paragraph:

As shown in the accompanying Figures, the present invention is directed towards a method and playing assembly or apparatus designed to play a variation of the card game of baccarat, wherein features of the present invention include the ability of the player/participant designated as banker or any other game participant to participate in a bonus payout in the event of certain occurrences relating to the total number count of the hands, and especially of consecutive hands, and the implementation of an automated gaming assembly which makes the game of baccarat more available to players, more fun and entertaining for play, and can integrate the bonus payout method of the present invention.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 23, line 16 with the following amended paragraph:

Looking first to the method of playing the subject variation of the card game baccarat, herein ~~[[in]]~~ termed "baccarat plus", it is understood that it could be conducted on a variety of playing surfaces, and as will be described with regard to the embodiment of Figure 8, as an automated game on a gaming machine. In order to facilitate the playing of the "baccarat plus" variation, in a more conventional playing card manner, Figures 1 through 4 show an assembly generally indicated as 10 including a playing surface generally indicated as 12, specifically designed for playing of "baccarat plus" but as will be apparent hereinafter, is adaptable for the playing of a variety of other card games. The playing surface 12 includes a plurality of consecutively arranged player areas 14, the number of which may vary ~~dependend~~ dependent upon house or casino rules. Each of the player areas 14 is numbered consecutively as one through nine and at least partially surround a betting or wagering surface 16. The wagering surface 16 preferably includes an elongated, somewhat curvilinear or U-shaped betting area or section 18 accessible to all of the player areas 14 and designated to receive chips representing wagers on a player's hand. Similarly the wagering surface area 16 may include a plurality of consecutive numerals, equal ~~[[on]]~~ in number~~[[s]]~~ to the number of

playing areas and indicated as 20. The wagering surface portion 20 is reserved and designated to receive chips from each of the various players who wish to wager that the banker's hand will be the winning hand of any given baccarat game. An indentation generally indicated as 22 may be provided and represents a dealer position, wherein the dealer is a representative of the casino or house and has certain specified duties during, before and after the playing of the individual hands.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 26, line 11 with the following amended paragraph:

As in conventional baccarat, the player/participant having possession of the shoe 30 and being in charge of physically distributing cards therefrom is designated the banker. As best shown in Figures 1, 3 and 4, the playing assembly and/or apparatus of the present invention further comprises a display assembly generally indicated as 38 which may be mounted adjacent the playing surface 12, such as on an elongated standard as at 40 which positions a display portion 42 above the playing surface 12. The display portion 42 should be in clear site of at least all of the players located at the various playing areas 14 and preferably by the one or more dealers located at least at the dealer position 22. As shown in Figure 3 the display portion 42 is structured to

display the location of the player area, designated as the banker, such as by indicating a numeral, as at 46, representing one of the player areas 14. Similarly, a visual display in the form of a logo 47 may also be displayed on the display portion 42. The plus designation area, as at 48, will represent a plurality of numerals, generally one through five, wherein such numerals indicate the consecutive number of hands of the banker which have the same total number count and more specifically wherein each of the consecutive hands have the same number count as a predetermined number count designated by the casino, as will be explained in greater detail hereinafter.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 31, line 5 with the following amended paragraph:

The banker as at 78 begins dealing the cards in a conventional, alternate fashion to form both the player's hand and the banker's hand. More specifically, the banker places his first card in the proper player section 26, as at 79, in order to define the first card of the banker's hand, and immediately thereafter the banker, as at 80 delivers the first card of the player's hand. As represented at 82, the banker deals a second card representing the second card to both the banker and player. With reference to Figure 5A, the dealer then uncovers the cards representative of the

player's hand as at 84. The banker as at 86 uncovers the cards representative of the banker's hand and the camera assembly 32 proceeds to read the cards oriented in the card positioning section 26 as shown in Figure 2, being represented of the banker's hand.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 32, line 13 with the following amended paragraph:

If it is determined as at 98, that the banker's hand is a nine, including either a natural nine or a broken nine, the banker's hand wins the conventional game and a next game of baccarat will be played in the same manner as stated above. Although the bonus wager may be designated as immediately lost if a natural nine does not result, in alternate embodiments, if the banker wins or if the banker's hands has a total number count equal to the predetermined number count of nine, either natural or not, no additional bonus wager need be placed in order to continue to be eligible for the collection of the bonus payout, as set forth above, and/or a bonus payout in the form of an increase to the amount won by the winning hand may be made. The banker as at 102 continues to play successive hands. If, in the preferred embodiment, the initial hand was a natural nine and the next consecutive banker's hand is also equal to a natural nine, as at 104, it is designated as a winner and will collect at least a

minimal portion of the bonus payout awarded for the consecutive hands totaling nine. The banker continues playing successive baccarat games hoping to achieve additional, consecutive bankers hands which equal nine. However, the establishment of at least two consecutive hands, such as the banker's hands in the preferred embodiment, each having a total number count of nine, designates the participant, such as the banker as winning or collecting at least a minimal portion of the bonus payout. Depending upon the house preference, either a natural nine or any hand totaling nine may be ~~designating~~ designated as eligible for the bonus payout.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 34, line 12 with the following amended paragraph:

It should be recognized that once a banker has achieved a consecutive number of the designated number total, which in the illustrated embodiment is a natural nine, the bonus payout is preferably guaranteed to the banker, whether or not he/she continues as the banker or later loses a hand. Along these lines, if the person continues as the banker, it is possible that the bonus payout can be pulled out in favor of none or a new bonus wager, the entire amount can be the new bonus wager, or the amount won can designate a minimum that may be surpassed by a future greater number of consecutive bonus hands so as to increase the

minimum amount guaranteed.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 35, line 24 with the following amended paragraph:

In yet another embodiment of the method of playing the variation "baccarat plus" as represented in Figures 7 and 7A a random system is activated to increase the bonus payout initially announced by the casino as at 62 in the event that more than two consecutive banker's hands are made, such as three, four, five or more consecutive hands, each of which have a total number count of nine. Therefore with reference to Figures 7 and 7A, after the banker makes or indicates his bonus wager as at 70 he activates the system utilizing or manipulating the key switch or by any other conventional method, such as on a respective one of the switch structure 56 as at 72. The activation of the switch first serves as at 74 to activate the random reward system in the event of more than two consecutive banker's hands occur each having an equal number count of nine. The method of playing the variation of "baccarat plus" continues as set forth with regard to the embodiments of Figures 5, 5A and 6, 6A up to the point where more than two consecutive banker's hands are made. At this point, the bonus payout originally announced as at 62 in Figure 6 is increased, because of the difficulty in achieving numerous

consecutive hands. The increase is performed on a random basis as at 105. Such random increase in the bonus payout may occur by any random facility or regimen[[t]] determined by the house and may be further determined electronically or by more conventional means such as the roll of dice, etc. Once the bonus payout as at 62 has been increased after obtaining the two consecutive banker's hands with an equal number count of nine, the game continues in the manner set forth with the embodiment of Figures 5, 5A and 6, 6A. With these embodiments, however, the casino will of course recognize that more than two consecutive hands accomplished by the banker is entitled to an increased bonus payout. Such bonus payout will be increased on a preset basis which is known to the banker and the player's prior to the beginning of play.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 43, line 6 with the following amended paragraph:

Looking once again to the previously recited bonus payout method of the present invention, such a system may also be integrated into the baccarat gaming assembly 100, either alone, and/or preferably in conjunction with one or more of the previously recited variants provided by the computer processor assembly. Specifically, in such an embodiment, the computer processor assembly is structured to keep track of at least consecutive ones

of the user's hand, and especially the final number counts thereof. In particular, if the final number counts of at least two consecutive ones of the user's hand equal a certain predefined number count, such as preferably nine or a natural nine, the computer processor assembly is structured to indicate a bonus payout for the user. Furthermore, the computer processor assembly 130 may be structured to continue to monitor continuing ones of the user's hands, increasing the bonus payout if more than two consecutive user's hand have the same, predefined final number count, and preferably terminating the increase of the bonus payout once a sequential one of the user's hands does not match the preceding user's hand. As with the previous embodiments, the computer processor assembly 130 may be structured to pay the bonus payout regardless if at least two consecutive hands have the matching predetermined number count, or can be structured to bonus payout if the user lets the bonus payout "ride" on subsequent hands. In such an embodiment the computer processor assembly is preferably responsive to a user decision to cash out their bonus payout or altogether if required to cash out the bonus payout. Preferably, the computer processor assembly 130 is structured to accumulate the bonus payout only if the matching consecutive ones of the user's hand are all either banker's hands or player's hands. As such, a user may not switch between player and banker and continue to be

eligible for a bonus payout based upon the preceding hand. Naturally, a variant whereby the user can switch sides is also contemplated.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 45, line 8 with the following amended paragraph:

Still, however, so as to further entice play of the baccarat gaming assembly 100, the initial wager made by the player may be sufficient to qualify the player for a bonus. Viewing a preferred embodiment, the payout can be based not only on the number of consecutive hands totaling nine, but also on the number of credits played and/or the actual type of winning hand as in the payout tables previously illustrated. For further example, the table below may be illustrative of the payouts to be made for winning hands, including consecutive nines, as varied depending upon the number of credits played.